"Where there is no vision the people perish"

THE POETRY REVIEW

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A LYRIC: 1889

GILBERT MURRAY, O.M.

She walked in the morning air
  When the sun was happy and high;
A white rose fell from her hair;
  She saw and she passed it by.

And I thought: "Shall I bow my head
  For a thing cast lightly away?"
"I will stoop for her," I said;
  "But not for a dead rose spray."

But back in the print of her feet
  I came amid winds and snows;
And I kissed the stones of the street,
  But where was the rose, the rose?

THE PEREGRINES PASS

RACHEL ANNAND TAYLOR

Through the soft sad air the leaves and the stars are falling;
  In trances of crystal and rose the woodlands lie,
    When the great hawks go by
To whatsoever golden eyries are calling
    Under an orient sky.

Through the radiant resignations of September
  Away from our fells do these proud peregrines pass,
    Even an eagle, as
Their caged and their hooded kin below remember
    And make vain stir, alas!

In orchard and dell the harmless birds assemble.
  Unfallen still in their own inviolate sky
    The eagle kind draw nigh.
While the craven eyes are closed, and the tamed hearts tremble—
    Let the arrogant wings go by!

FROM "THE FALL OF THE YEAR"

WILFRID THORLEY

When we went forth
  In May and June,
Our hearts within us
  Sang but one tune,
The long week's latter day,
Chaff and chatter day,
Happy Saturday
  Afternoon.

It's forth we'd fare
  With head aloft,
To loll in sunshine
  By mead and croft.
Flowers would shed o' sweet
May and meadow-sweet,
Such a bed o' sweet,
  Clean and soft.

In hawthorn-drift
  As white's the moon,
The birds' loud singing
  Was love's own tune.
The air was loud with it,
Branches bowed with it,
Spring made proud with it
  Lass and loon. . .

WAVE AFTER WAVE

WILFRID GIBSON

The old hand crippled in his chair
Sits gazing at the smouldering coal;
Yet nothing his dazed eyes see there
Save weltering waves that swing and roll—
That swing and roll unceasingly.

The waves which ever day and night,
Since he, a lad put out to sea,
Held him spellbound, still flood his sight
As on the tide of memory
His old wits float unceasingly:

And till the dark bunk of the grave
Shall hold him berthed in his last sleep,
Before his eyes, wave after wave,
Will swing and sway the swirling deep
Unceasingly, unceasingly . . .

WOMAN

For D.

HENRY SAVAGE

So very long ago it must have been
When first we met!—perhaps in Mitylene,
When you came radiant from Tyrrhenian seas,
An Aphrodite, and Praxiteles
In marble made you even lovelier;
Or was it when, magnificent in fur,
Rubens prolonged your immortality?

I do not know! I only wonder why
My youth returns when, in the flesh again
Made reincarnate, you appear, and reign
The undisputed woman of all time,
And word with word once more perforce must chime
And Nature be adorned once more by Art.
Those days and these seem far enough apart
But are now one in you. O simple truth
That any difference in Age and Youth
Is in appearance only! Souls, once seen,
Are young and old as ever they have been
And ever will be.
But you know it, you
Who smile the smile that Leonardo knew
And gave a painter's tribute.
Lisa, take
This further homage for your Woman's sake.

SUMMER IN ARCADIA

For Denis Binyon

WILFRED CHILDE

Yours are the byways green and gracious with
Soft grass and twisten orchards, with a sense
Of ancient peace and hallowed innocence,
Wise folk-tales, rustic legend, kindly myth.

Round cupolas and belfries in the blue
Of late noon flit the swallows and there steals
The mellow sound of bells—no need of wheels
To thrash along the tortured time for you.

For Peace, who has forsaken brawling hours
In howling towns and highways, here remains,
Plashing her feet in quiet dews and rains,
Asleep amid the nodding harebell flowers.

Here she at some old pear-tree's gnarlèd foot
Lets silver beads slip through her tranquil hands
In dreaming prayer and here at dawn she stands,
When paling stars flee from the sun's pursuit . . .

ON DIEPPE QUAYSIDE IN THE RAIN

L. AARONSON

The rain is small and lets the sunlight in,
And soon I see the rain as falling light.
There was rain rushing through my head all night;
I thought the world was drowning in my dreams.

Rain. Rain. The dolphin on its spire
Is curling through the clouds. The market fish
Seem ready for returning. In the mesh,
On seesaw decks, the catch is still at sea.

My island is a *café*. There I take
Those stronger waters that oppose their kin

And thrive on civil war; and so begin
To hope that dear defeat in which I drown.

And now the rain takes on a Pernod look.
The ships are dancing to the radio,
That souses half the street, and gaily go
Out, out, to sea, to home, where the surf sings.

THE ROWER

T. W. RAMSEY

My lonely rower, coming in from sea
  Calm and the tide full,
Ever your back is turned to me—
  Pull on your oars, pull!

The light is failing, the boat so frail,
  I fear you will never land;
No force is here of steam or sail
  But man's heart and hand

Only, and you a boy as small
  As the ripple that runs beside
Your boat; far is the harbour wall,
  Strong and grey the tide.

FROM AGATHIAS, THE HISTORIAN*

(Byzantine Poet of the Sixth Century A.D.)

TRANSLATED BY JACK LINDSAY

I drink no wine, but I'll no more repine;
I'll be quite drunk, if you will sip. I'll drink.
Touch only with your lips, I'll touch with mine:
I'll drink unblinkingly and never shrink.
O lovely wine, O cup that thus convoys
Your kiss to me and tells its stolen joys.

*The original of Ben Jonson's "Drink to me only with thine eyes".

NATURE AND ART

THE LATE A. V. BOWEN

Out now, come out into the open air!
Throw down that ready pen too stuffed with ink,
That mind equivocal with careful words.
    Take off those skintight gloves,
  Come, emptied bare
Outside, where life is truer than you think.
Oh, there's a language in the mouth of birds
More urgent than your mortal deaths and loves.

Look at this tragic earth, touch this coarse grass,
This raindrop taste, and hear this whispering tree;
Breathe the deep gust of this unmemoried breeze,
If then no change of heart
  Cometh to pass,
No curious hint of huge cosmogeny
Confronts your soul
Know yourself dead, and trifle not with art.

THE MIRROR

WRENNE JARMAN

  I see him in a glass—
The one I love, and love so longingly,
  (So faultily, alas!)
    His image smiles on me
In the dim chamber where my days must be.

  Full many an hour I pass,
Intent upon that other lighted room
  So close and yet so far,
    Where objects veiled in gloom
A new and brighter, lovelier look assume.

  There my belovéd gleams,
And looks at me with deep and yearning eyes,
  And all his message seems
    To chide my coquetries,
And bid me courage take to seize the prize.

And then my eyelids close,
And headily before their screen is down,
A perfume as of rose
Does all my senses drown,
And, seemingly, strong arms enfold me round.

O hospitable eve
That welcomes Love into my humble house,
And bids him never leave
His sister and his spouse!
O night that torments in the beechen boughs!

As I dissolve in him,
My fears forgetting in his honeyed breast,
Weak limb and trembling limb
Profoundly come to rest,
No bound between possessor and possessed . . .

Then does the illusion pass—
Unwillingly my ravished soul returns.
The image in the glass
With the same ardour burns,
But sadness in the eyes my care discerns.

And once my loved one said:
Why seek My sundered image, and not Me?
Faint heart, that woos a dead
Reflection, canst not see
Me standing in thy chamber, patiently?

SONNET

DANNIE ABSE

If you could be as of the dead, but living,
That I may journey there of my own accord,
And thinking you dead, could plead to you with all my being
With such tenderness the ordinary could not afford,
And you listen, only listen deeply, without your selves intruding
Upon the sense of strangeness I have stored

Inadvertently, from all our days together now upsurging
And speak such nearness the dead alone could but record;
Would you then return to me with all your love returning
Into our otherness, that once existed, which so blindly I ignored,
That you may trespass over, my white one, my darling,
Flowers I never planted, whose absence you too long endured?

And could you give again my kisses more than casual meaning?
And would you come back home to me, oh like a smile restored?

MARRIAGE IN HEAVEN

PHŒBE HESKETH

Think not of me as flesh and blood
And warm lips waiting for your own,
For like a shadow of your mood
My mind to your mind's shape has grown.

Think not of me as force and fire
To charge you with an ardent flow,
For I endure beyond desire
To soothe you on my bed of snow.

Think not of me as weak and strong,
As faith and frailty in turn;
I am the string to sound your song,
A well of healing when you burn.

Think not of me as woman, far
And near to tease your lonely heart.
Think not at all—I am the star
That is your spirit's counterpart!

FROM A SUBURBAN TRAIN

DOUGLAS GIBSON

My past looks from these windows, wondering
At the dark mysteries of the suburban names:
Battersea, Clapham, Lavender Hill

Explored in adolescence, wandering
With the hungry fever burning in me, until
The phantasmal shadows of the streets at night, slatterned
With the yellow lamps flowering exotically in the blue,
The elating slash of the electric trains, patterned
In me the first poetry and love I ever knew.

What if the streets were ugly, the girls cheap
With their painted lips and easy caresses?
To me the streets were as strange and mysterious as sleep
And the girls bewitching as any fairy-tale princesses.

Now, all these years later, I have reason for gratitude
To these streets, the forgotten girls, the evocative names
Though at the time I little enough understood
The passion that shook me with such beautiful clamorous claims.

THE FOOL

B. R. GIBBS

His dumpling head swivels a popping eye,
  With pale unsighted gaze he sees the moon
Cheese-cake, the stars as diamond dough that he
  Clumsily mouths on baking afternoon.

Trees wag their fingers at his wagging hand,
  Shadows dance beatless to his beatless brain,
His splaying feet, forever sunk in sand,
  Scrabble across the days and back again.

Yet wild-run kittens pounce on him to play
  Tricks with his fondling fingers, scurrying beasts
Scamper beside him, let him come their way,
  Starlings, unstartled, grab their berry feasts.

To other men a thing obscene, absurd,
  For hiding out of sight or cruel joke,
But to a rabbit trapped, a wounded bird,
  A gentle changeling lodged with alien folk.

WILLIAM COLLINS IN CHICHESTER

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

Alone with his genius, deserted by all others,
What remained but madness? We have all known it
Howling outside the safety of ourselves
Like wolves on the fringes of a cringing city,
In dreams or childhood terrors. Who knows, the schoolboy
Dawdling in streets pent up with fog, discovering
The long cathedral stranded like a whale
Among the hens of houses, bunched, close, cackling
And brown, first felt its tentacles, or dreaded
The loneliness of self, whilst leaning on windows
And hearing Sunday bells drenched with the rain
Turning over and over, the bloom of lilacs falling
Unmourned. Up panelled stairs the smug smells drifted
Of roasting meat, worsted, wool, the talk
Of hats. Whilst there, beyond the sparkling roofs
The downs, long yellow dunes of lassitude
Lay unheeding the complacent city
They dwarfed, enfolded and ignored, forgetting
The runes, the citadels, the centuries' footprints
Tracing their trackways, eroding the slow green.
Imminent, ominous, charged with storms, these hills
Loomed in his mind like portents. On the fringe
Of being in every man some token lingers,
Memory of his tremendous past,
Waiting to overwhelm or to annul.
Look inward, judge not; he trembled and made way
When we withstand, and conquering, are blind.

• Author's note: "Written after reading Ruth Pitter's article (*Poetry Review*, January-February, 1951) and a walk past Chichester Cathedral which lay just like a whale in the mist."

FOUNDRY

D. G. BRIDSON

Vivid eye of the volcano,
  Blaze of the sacrificial pyre,
Glow less balefully in anger
  Than this elemental fire.

Pyramid at the hollow heart,
  Cenotaph in mountain base,
Crypt or galleried catacomb,—
  There is no awefuller burial place.

Earth's perpetual inferno
  Under its firmamental floor
Burns with no more sullen hatred,
  Molten at the tortured core.

What promethean pride fulfilled
  This promise of the nightmare mind—
That shackled lightning should be set
  To work the treadmills of mankind?

ODE

To K.

HUGH GORDON PORTEUS

Upon an Oriental scroll
The clouds are still, the mountains roll,

The waterfall hangs like a gown,
And rain writes vertically down

A fragrant name, in simple runes.
A bird suspended still, still tunes

Two notes that, though the air be mute,
Spell O, as from a bamboo flute:

Suggesting, by this double line,
Anon, the solitary pine.

All pictures fade, but visions burn.
Unseen by day, the stars return.

Thus while upon this ageless scroll
The stuff is cracked, the pattern's whole.

THE POET

MAURICE CARPENTER

Take off your poetry-loving faces
The haggard and the pensive look;
The poet now will show his paces,
Lines you'll not find in any book.

Wipe off that far away
Pained expression. You can laugh
If you've a mind to at the way
My eyes and eyebrows blow the gaff.

The clown is jumping on the sage,
The dancer jumping on your dream,
The conjuror invites your rage
And vanishes. Why do you scream?

AN ELEGY FOR STEFAN SCHIMANSKI

(Man of letters, editor, war correspondent, drowned when his plane crashed in the sea early in the Korean campaign)

G. S. FRASER

The watcher's seat precedes the newsreel skies.
Headlong to headlines, fallen like a stone,
One mild, and worried, and persistent, dies
Much, at a pinch, like men of harder bone,

Sunk in that sea's insidious extent,
Less deep, less wide, than man's destructive will—
Such killing cold would not for him relent
Whose heart was never cold, nor poised to kill.

He was no hawk, nor like the hooded airman,
But a mild seeker for a lost kind God,
A literary scout, a sort of chairman
For groups of bothered notions! And how odd

He should end so, and inappropriateness
Of the steel context! Definitely dead

Like any hero, Stefan seems the less;
What one remembers more—the shy cocked head:

As I have seen it often on evenings at home,
Turning aside from its talk of the latest book
To where some Venus, breaking through the foam
Of cocktail chatter, had transfixed its look,

Springing above the crowded heads between
Some flushed young face with conscious beauty fired,
Like, on a burnt brown hill, one shoot of green:
And Stefan, with a sighing hope, admired!

Has lost all girls for good now. May have found,
One prays, beyond our plummeting, his peace
Upon the bosom of that deepest ground
That is our only, or our last, release.

WE SHALL MIGRATE

For P. D. Cummins

R. H. WARD

We shall migrate or perish; our times are ended.
The lark is gone into the sky and will not return;
Where from the river the children's voices echo
These are become ancestral, prophesy death.
Enquire at the station, trains have ceased to run;
The shipping-office offers no information;
Within the city secret fuses smoulder.
Returning home, we find the bridges broken,
All routes cut off, the distant house deserted.
The tower is fallen; the times are at their term.
We shall migrate, attempt the dreadful passage,
And neither by land nor sea nor yet by air,
Impossible men and with no possible compass,
Passing among the formless and terrible beasts,
Seeking the difference only, the different time;
So we shall journey within, we shall journey elsewhere.
The lark is gone into the sky and will not return.
And if we arrive we arrive. These times are ended.

THE SHAKESPEARE MYSTERY

(Part One) by HERBERT CORBY

Sherlock Holmes : "I would call your attention to the curious incident of the dog in the night-time"

Watson: "The dog did nothing in the night-time"

Sherlock Holmes: "That was the curious incident."

—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The peculiar thing about the evidence relating to the life of William Shakespeare is that there is no evidence.

All that is known of Shakespeare's life is a scattering of tentative facts and a plethora of romantic conjecture and assumption, with a vast measure of guesswork and prevarication intermingled to confuse the general vagueness.

The date of Shakespeare's birth is uncertain, but as there is a record of his christening on April 26th 1564, it can be assumed, not unfairly, that he was born on or about April 23rd. He died in 1616. Between these two dates mystery and doubt stretch across the years.

Of his education nothing at all is known, though it is alleged that he attended the Grammar School at Stratford-on-Avon. In this connection Sir Sidney Lee writes "William *probably* entered the school in 1571" and Chambers thoughtfully lists some of the books which *might* have been used in the school at that time. This seems to be a quite unnecessary labour of love, for, again according to Lee, "William *probably* left school at 13".

When he was eighteen Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, who was already with child. They had three children—a daughter Susanna: and in 1585 the twins, Hamnet and Judith.

Thereafter Shakespeare's life is mainly ill-defined tradition and romance of that kind beloved of literary men in the pedantic days of their senility. Salted with academic puerilities, the sugared romance is the tale that is told by the orthodox biographer.

Shakespeare might have been concerned in a poaching episode on the estate of Sir Thomas Lucy: (so writes Rowe in 1709, echoing with some elaboration the chit-chat of one Archdeacon Davies). He may have left his wife in Stratford and journeyed into London to seek his fortune: or he may have just left his wife. (At least there were no more children.) He may have held horses outside the theatre.

"His intellectual capacity and the amiability with which he turned to account his versatile powers were *probably* soon recognised, and thenceforth his promotion was assured" gushes Lee in that fulsome book which

above all leads the reader to doubt Shakespeare's authorship of the plays, and sets the style of the more credulous biographers of the Stratford school.

Another uninterred rumour says that Shakespeare may have been a schoolteacher: there are some traditions of his acting ("the ghost in his own 'Hamlet'") and some documentary proof that he was over-fond of starting legal proceedings about some small debt. He seems to have flourished in London, bought a house in Stratford, taken "unto himself a coat of arms and a motto ('Not without right') and died."

From these vague facts—and these are practically all the known facts of Shakespeare's life,—Emerson manages to deliver the moral judgement that Shakespeare lived "an obscure and profane life": others have deplored the fact that he was "given to sexual passion all his life": and Whittier, with what can only be miraculous insight, is responsible for "Whether Bacon wrote the wonderful plays or not, I am quite sure the man Shakspere neither did nor could."

The poems "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece" were Shakespeare's first publications: then there were the plays. Sixteen of them were published while he was still alive, but several of these early versions are corrupt, from which it is assumed that they are "pirated" versions, the work either of someone who took down the play in shorthand during a performance, or of a player who knew his own part and remembered as much as he could of the others. Sometimes it would appear that a good version was published in Shakespeare's own lifetime, possibly to forestall the piratical publishers: but in 1623 two of Shakespeare's theatrical friends undertook the collection and publication of a number of the plays from the actors' copy, and it is from this edition of his works that most of the accepted texts of Shakespeare's plays are taken.

In various attempts to fix the approximate year in which each play was written, the plays have been exhaustively examined and analysed. Although opinion is always shifting as new theories are evolved, the professional critics have arrived at something like agreement about the dates of composition by a multiplicity of methods of examination; by contemporary record of performance, by comparison of metrical styles in plays known to be early and those known to be late, by the percentage (yes, literally percentage) of double or single rhymes or line-endings; by a study of the way that in the earlier plays sense and punctuation pause at the end of the line, and that as the writer developed his technique he took the sense on past the last beat of the iambic pentameter and used the cæsura very differently and with greater competence; by reference to current events, and by echoes from the plays of other Elizabethan dramatists. These methods have revealed that there is apparently considerable non-Shakespearean material in most of the plays, though there

is nothing like unanimous agreement on the proportion of it nor even on which passages contain the alien work.

There are no authentic Shakespearean manuscripts extant, and in all there are five alleged signatures. The only existing letters to Shakespeare concern petty items of business, and there are no letters that he wrote himself. In fact, we have nothing other than his name in Shakespeare's writing, though in the British Museum there is the manuscript of a play entitled "Sir Thomas More" (by Anthony Munday) to which Shakespeare is supposed to have added a written passage: but there is no very adequate proof that the writing is indeed Shakespeare's.

There are comparatively few contemporary mentions of Shakespeare and these seem to indicate that his fellow playwrights had no particular regard for him. Greene, if he is understood correctly called him an "upstart crow", and only Ben Jonson can be said to have known anything personal about him, for he said he loved him "this side idolatory". Actually it seems to have been well this side, for Jonson also said things that were much less flattering, and at times clearly hated him. It was Jonson who made fun of Shakespeare's motto with "Not without Mustard": and it was Jonson who called him "Poet Ape".

The most surprising thing about Shakespeare is not that so many woolly theories have been created about his life and works, but that the academic world has been for so long intent on creating a traditional and glorified Shakespeare. In view of the pervading vagueness it is perhaps inevitable that sundry hypotheses have been put forward to prove—by what J. M. Robertson has called "the method of speculative ignorance"—that a person of such undistinguished beginnings could not have written the plays, and to suggest that the author was not in fact William Shakespeare, the vague character from Stratford-on-Avon, but someone far more cultured and knowledgeable than he could have been.

Almost all the evidence to support these theories that Shakespeare was not the author of the play is internal—that is, it comes from the plays themselves.

An example of this internal evidence can be quoted here, by way of establishing a neutral basis for subsequent criticism. It is a fairly innocuous example, for it does not touch on any of the authorship theories.

In 1593 Christopher Marlowe, "the muses' darling", was murdered in a little room in a Deptford tavern after an argument about the bill—"the reckoning": and Touchstone in *As You Like It* says "When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room." It has been contended that this refers to Marlowe since later in the play Marlowe is accurately quoted—"Whoever loved that loved not at first sight" and Marlowe, whom Shakespeare calls "Dead Shepherd", had written "Infinite riches in a little room."

But if this quotation carries the reference suggested and was intended to convey anything at all to the audience, the facts of Marlowe's death must have been generally known. But they were not. Gabriel Harvey, who was something of a literary hanger-on and gossip, believed that Marlowe died of plague: and again Chambers dates *As You Like It* as 1600, which if correct would mean that the remark was quite untopical.

Now this quotation may or may not refer to Marlowe, though it is perhaps difficult to know to what else it does refer: but the reference is not generally discernible: and in any case it could only be evidence to those who knew the details of Marlowe's death. It is evidence by reference, not fact. Most of the authorship theories are concerned with just this sort of reasoning, and clearly one cannot be too dogmatic about the certainty of the truth thus revealed.

(*To be continued.*)

ROBERT NICHOLS: 1893 – 1944

By NORMAN MAWDSLEY

The fate of Robert Nichols was unkind. Congratulated on his first book *Invocation*, published when he was twenty-two, greatly praised at the height of the First War as the finest of war poets, rewarded with a Professorship at Tokyo after his *Aurelia*, published when he was twenty-seven, he began to fade, and faded over a period of twenty years until his death passed almost unnoticed. He had outlived himself. What caused this? Above all the poet turned critic. Also much of his early work had been inspired by war, and war poets seldom survive their war. Time has qualified the critics' praises of *Ardours and Endurances* (1917), though some of the poems retain their lustre. The best of the collection, as *Dawn on the Somme*, prove what a romantic he was. He thinks of Apollo's bow even on the battlefield:

> "Last night rain fell over the scarred plateau,
> And now from the dark horizon, dazzling, flies
> Arrow on fire-plumed arrow to the skies
> Shot from the bright arc of Apollo's bow."

Compare this with the opening lines of Sassoon's *Attack*.

> "At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun
> In the wild purple of the glowering sun
> Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud
> The menacing scarred slope."

Nichols sees ageless beauty even in this scene; for Sassoon nature conspires with man to make the world cruel.

Besides the war poems this volume contains such Georgian *bric-à-brac* as *A Faun's Holiday* in the Darley style; but it is in the poems, entitled *Black Songs*, that we see the real Nichols:

"Stillness falls and a glare.
The woods in darkness lie.
The fields are stretched and stare
Under the empty sky.
Vacant the ways of the air,
Along which no birds fly.
Only the high sun's flare
Spills on the empty sky."

Nature and human passion are brought together with subtlety:

"Toward the hill then zigzagged
One wind-harried plover—
Rocked for a moment . . .
Cried to love and lover
The top of loneliness
Ere he heeled over."

Such feelings pointed towards the 1920 volume, *Aurelia, and other Poems*, a success and rightly; for here was revealed, particularly in the *Sonnets*, a poet of a power which seemed unlimited.

Of the *Four Idylls, Night Rhapsody* is not far from greatness. It begins:

"How beautiful it is to wake at night,
When over all there reigns the ultimate spell
Of complete silence, darkness absolute,
To feel the world, tilted on axle-tree,
In slow gyration, with no sensible sound,
Unless to ears of unimagined beings,
Resident incorporeal or stretched
In vigilance of ecstasy among
Ethereal paths and the celestial maze."

But in this book are works of greater urgency. Nichols had loved deeply, and had lost that love. He bares his heart.

The brief summer of peaceful love is enshrined in a charming poem, *The Little Room*. Too soon, however, the poet realises how near sorrow is to love, and he treats of that mystery in the exquisite *Aurelia*:

"When within my arms I hold you,
Motionless in long surrender,
Then what love-words can I summon,
Tender as my heart is tender?

"When within your arms you hold me,
And kisses speak your love unspoken,
Then my eyes with tears run over,
And my very heart is broken."

How strong love was then! But when he wrote the *Sonnets* all was over.

We follow the lover through the period of the first wonder at his success to the time of the calm enjoyment of an accomplished fact. All is harmonious. He is at last content:

"Lover," you say; "how beautiful that is,
That little word!" and still you sigh it over
Till the twin syllables become a kiss
Against the brow your lips' light whisperings cover.
Yes, it is beautiful. I have marked it long,
Long in my dusty head its jot secreted,
Yet my heart never knew this word a song
Till in the night softly by you repeated.

All at once the sunlight leaves him. Suddenly he wakes from a lover's reverie to find:

"How far apart even we lovers are,
How brief the hours for knowledge ere we die."

What has happened? a landslide has begun; bitter recriminations on both sides, a compromise, self-pity, self-justification. Desire only remains, and mourning:

"Now must we mourn or in more bitter mood
Each lay to each the onus of this fate."

The peak of love has been reached by one lover only; he must plunge down the other side alone. He whips up enough rage to harden himself for a while, but finally he begs for her again on any terms:

"Return, return, whether defaced by all
The cruelties of your life's devouring greeds
Or wholly corrupted by the funeral
Lust of the worm who on your substance feeds;
For rather would I such thrall should me damn
Than, free, remain the cipher that I am."

All that is left is sorrow, with a haunting memory of darkness and tainted love.

The *Sonnets to Aurelia* have the starkness of reality, which the London setting heightens; *The Flower of Flame,* written a little earlier, is its idealistic counterpart with a setting by the sea, and this very idealism renders its pathos even more painful. We leave the lover facing the oncoming physical storm:

"Rent clouds, like boughs, in darkness hang
Close overhead;
The foreland's bell-buoy begins to clang
As if for the dead;
Awake they where you are sleeping?
The chasms crack; the heavens revolt;
With tearing sound

Bright bolt volleys on flaring bolt, .
Wave and cloud clash; through deep, through vault,
Huge thunders rebound!
But they wake not where you are sleeping."

With this Nichols's long-lasting youth ended, and when he looked at the world, it was not the mist of *Black Songs* which faced him, not the reverie of *November* with its quiet undertones of childhood; it was a terrible blackness, such as he had foreseen, come to settle upon him:

". . . I am sad, a long time sad;
Young too, many years remain,
And I must finish them all who have never been glad,
I who know too very well what each will contain."

The first fiery journey is over.

When Frank Swinnerton wrote of Nichols in *The Georgian Literary Scene*, he said he could not account for the fact that after such fair beginnings the poet failed. The reasons are to hand.

His supreme gift, the lyric, had been exploited to the full, and the affair celebrated in *Aurelia* had by forcing it to flower so brilliantly, worn it away sooner than would otherwise have happened. Nichols was indeed a lyricist, and the exhausted years after 1920 were anything but conducive to the exercise of his gift. Then his health, first damaged in 1916, from now on began gradually to decline, and that had its effect; while his acceptance of Lafcadio Hearn's Chair at Tokyo was a mixed blessing for a poet, since in this new office he was forced to turn his attention to criticism on a large scale. In time he became a self-critic.

The preface to his play, *Guilty Souls* (1921) shows us a Nichols who felt it his duty to take to the platform. He preaches: "Before the War we believed in something no man has seen: we believed in the England 'not made with hands' of which, it seems, those who rule . . . for all their protestations appear to know nothing. Is there in England to-day a man or woman dares, in the face of ridicule . . . when cynicism is the only fashion and opportunism the only creed, to raise the banner . . . the banner of the Ideal?" He had forgotten how much his misdirected ardour would cost him. He was entering a field for which he was not equipped.

Self-criticism was ruinous to Nichols. He began various poetical projects, only to cast them aside in fragments. He turned to prose; he wrote a play for "The Theatre of To-morrow", wrote *Fantastica*, a "Romance of Idea". He wrote a novelette, he translated some Goethe and Turgenev.

That his lyrical inspiration could still break through barriers he had raised between himself and his earlier simplicity, can be seen in *The Sower* and *At Forth-Faring*, while the deeper note is struck in *To D'Annunzio*.

With the years his critical aberration increased. *Fisbo, or the Looking-glass Loaned* appeared in 1934, and was well received; but looking at it now we may regret that the poet of *Aurelia* should have cultivated the

pungency of a satirist. It was surely lack of magnanimity that led him to lavish so many clever rhyming couplets on Fisbo; it was weakness to be made jealous by the career of a crude exhibitionist. He longs for fame:

> "O Fame, dear Fame, dear fragile stern old body,
> I've always been honest,—I don't turn out shoddy
> However the merchant winks and Fashion nods.
> I have been ever faithful to my gods:
> Music, Sense, Passion and Imagination.
> Won't you perhaps send me an invitation?
> I'm getting on. In a few days I'll be forty."

It disappoints an admirer of Nichols, that these admissions should ring so true. This is not the work for him. Perhaps he sensed his mistake. He withdrew, he took on disguises, Prince Axel, Don Juan, and Melchior. No project came to fruition; his self-analysis grew more upon him. He was for ever unnecessarily explaining himself. He was paralysed by his introversion, which comes to light in the long introduction to *Such was my Singing* (1942), superfluous because *Dawn on the Somme*, *Aurelia*, and *Larus Marinus* speak for themselves; and he has no need to trouble himself because his poetic forms may seem old-fashioned. Poetry is always poetry whatever clothes it wears.

As can be seen by his choices for his anthology, his final publication as it proved, the middle-aged Nichols had forgotten his youth. He omitted some of his best early work and injured *Night Rhapsody* by shortening it. He thought he was writing better poetry than twenty years ago, and not only that, but he believed he had discovered "the poet's purpose". For Nichols criticism meant sterility. Poetry had become a study, an intellectual exercise, a consideration of the approach of Rimbaud, Juvenal and Leopardi to their art. His intellect had failed to co-ordinate with his creative instinct, so the requisite will-power was lacking and he planned without result until his death in the Autumn of 1944 at the age of fifty-one.

Nichols had once written of English poetry that it is "a thing governed from within by its own necessities, and not by rules of aesthetics imposed on it from without." Tragic that a man with this view should have forgotten it later. Rules of aesthetics were imposed on his creative ability from without and they tortured it into silence; but the Robert Nichols who survives to-day was influenced by nothing intellectual. He was exalted, he was grieved by the very fulness of life. He was fiery in love and disdain, of generous temper as in the *Elegy to Philip Heseltine*, proud of his land as in *Epic-Wind*, made wise by the beauty of early dreams, made wise by deep suffering; and above all he never lost faith and hope in man and the world. The reason for this was that to the end the core of his poet's vitality remained, clouded but still there, and that from it emanated the warmth of spirit which was always his.

Directions in American Poetry : I

THE DOCTOR FROM NEW JERSEY

(*The Collected Late Poems of William Carlos Williams, Winner of the National Book Award, 1950,* New Directions $3.00.)

By EVELYN SCOTT *

During the 1914-1918 war and just after, when the poetry of William Carlos Williams was first becoming known to the reviewer and the world at large, the need of every creative writer to speak, now and then, in self-elucidation, was not as pressingly evident as it is to-day. With the late Lola Ridge and Alfred Kreymborg, Dr. Williams was, at that time, editing the little magazine, *Others*; in which T. S. Eliot received publication some while before his acceptance by the late Harriet Monroe of Chicago—a founder and first editor of *Poetry, A Magazine of Verse*—brought him the accolades of the orthodox. And in that era of more genuine competition between publishers and of less stereotyped editing, it was seldom essential to include author-prefaces in volumes of poetry or fiction.

But since 1934 or 1935, such prefaces have become increasingly frequent as an author-protest against the perfunctoriness of most current reviewing and against a tendency among publishers to emulate the worst aspects of Hollywood by echoing opinions and affecting to "choose" where shoddy commercial "success" has already set the key.

Writers, generally, and in common with varieties of artists, are more often than previously justifiably a prey to the feeling that they are misinterpreted and misunderstood; and are so driven to make explicit to the public the aesthetic behind their work. And though it is perfectly possible to create with undeviating assurance yet be critically inarticulate and, in consequence, but a clumsy expounder of theory, self-statements on art prefacing volumes of imaginative poetry and prose are usually illumining of author-approaches to content and revelatory of the sources of and occasions for the creative virtues and limitations apparent to those who attempt scrupulous appraisals of specific talents. And particularly is this true of the preface of the book here discussed; since—terse though Dr. Williams is—his self-exposition of his art abounds in the inconsistencies which continue to bewilder readers who respond to his intensity and his

* *The Poetry Review* is happy to announce that her prolonged sojourn in England will now permit Miss Evelyn Scott, the distinguished Guggenheim Fellowship Award holder, to review significant American books from time to time.

Poet of *The Winter Alone, Precipitations,* and her new volume, soon to be published, *The Gravestones Wept,* novelist of *The Shadow of the Hawk, Bread and a Sword, Breathe Upon These Slain, Eva Gay, The Wave,* the double-decker *A Calendar of Sin, Migrations, Ideals* (satiric tales), *The Golden Door, Narcissus* (British title, *Bewilderment*), *The Narrow House,* and the forthcoming, just-completed *Escape into Living* and autobiographer of *Escapade* and *Background in Tennessee.* Miss Scott has also written successful children's books, *Witch Perkins, Billy the Maverick* and (in collaboration with Cyril Kay-Scott) *In the Endless Sands.*—Ed.

visual-emotional veracity when at his creative best, yet regretfully marvel that a poet of his uniquely colourful temperament and indisputable if limited integrity should have been satisfied, all his life, to register, over and over, not the full of the "perfect moment" immortalized by Flaubert, but merely its fractional part.

For upwards of thirty-five years, William Carlos Williams has been, to an extent, miscast as a medical practitioner in the small New Jersey town of Rutherford. And as we all know the impact of small minds on those of more scope is greater in small places than in cities, and that small minds universally demand it of every man that he triumph as an industrialist, banker, or salesman, and of every woman that she become a "social leader", it is not difficult to descry in Dr. Williams the "square-peg" whose effort to find accommodation in a "round-hole" could merely have culminated in despair and futility had he not taken refuge first in painting, then in poetry. And as his "refuge" is not into that vague welter of words and diffused emotions sometimes rightly disparaged as an "escape", the indignation his preface voices against the "psychoanalytic" view of art as a poor and make-shift "substitute" for the "up-and-doingness" of trade, will be shared by artists everywhere.

Through the years, Dr. Williams and Rutherford seem to have been out-staring each other in mutual aghastness; and had not Rutherford, obviously, at times, been in the ascendent, it is probable that the poetic outbursts which stamp with genius many pages in his prose work, *In the American Grain*, would have been sustained in his poetry by an intellectual continuity which he lacks, and which is contingent on the prolonged reflectiveness of which he appears incapable. And had this been the case, he could not be guilty—as he is in his preface—of an absurd confounding of the spare economy to which disdain of ornament has reduced his expression, and the "economy" of the electric dynamo.

"There is nothing sentimental about a machine; and a poem is, a small (or large) machine made of words. When I say there is nothing sentimental about a poem, I mean there can be no part, as in any other machine, that is redundant . . . Your attention is called now and then to some beautiful line or sonnet-sequence because of what is *said* there"—italics the reviewer's—"So be it. To me all sonnets *say* the same thing of no importance," Dr. Williams declares. And notwithstanding that there could be no more apt description than "redundant" for the ooze of dim feeling his aesthetic scruple scorns, this brief quotation should make it plain that—like many Americans to-day—he is suffering an attack of machine-age sophistry, and his preface, also—though not in sentimental contexts—is redundant and as an apologia would have better suited Lewis Mumford and similar purveyors of "functionalism" than the author of so much that is *sui generis*.

To Dr. Williams little that is art has ever mattered save what his own

poems *say*. But almost every line by him is informed with that three-dimensional view of externality which is one of the eyes, and implicit in genuinely realistic painting such as antedated "abstraction". And as his aesthetic integrity is considerable and his writings prove him to be preponderantly eye-minded, rather than ear-minded, his devotion to content has resulted in poetic forms in which musical effects—though sometimes apparent as cadence—are a negligible factor. And I take it to be this aspect of his natural endowments which he would defend in his preface, despite a critical inchoateness such as is often the painter's handicap, too.

However, the superior evocativeness of the finest poetry is due to the concentration of deep emotion in poetry's various parsimonious forms; and whether specific poets are "eye-minded" or "ear-minded" would, I think, be accepted as a personal idiosyncrasy—and not a basic issue in evaluating their work—were it not that prose jinglers so often insist on being regarded as "poets", and did not those who prefer "free verse" sometimes lapse into mere laconic prose. And though Dr. Williams yet has the faults which, from the beginning, have made of the sum of his work a thing less than its parts, this cannot be attributed to his urge to outstrip metrical precedents which were not adapted to the uses of his natural equipment.

Medical training appears to have fostered in him the visual exactitude notably displayed by him in his observations on the details of his surroundings; and when this—in combination with strong feeling—is applied to an articulation of himself in his setting, the effects achieved are still as unstaling as the lightning-flash. But this volume, like his preceding books, again discloses as his most conspicuous shortcoming that dread of the lachrymose which has led him to under-estimate the possibility—at least to those so musical-minded that they have absorbed Shakespeare, the poet, with Keats, Coleridge, and Whitman into the fabric of their thoughts—of evolving, by recourse to the sonnet and other versions of metre, forms that are as much a necessity of content as are his own, different though are his means. And the same fear has, to all intents and purposes, prompted him to utter aesthetic falsities such as are represented in his allusion to "godlike laughter", and in his dismissal of the—also faulty—Ezra Pound as "negative" and no more, and of the late Ford Madox Ford as that *bon vivant* of contemporaneous literary legend frequently depicted as having "wheezed" his way into the grave as a walking-advertisement of Burgundy, instead of as the tragically-defeated author of subtle novels and good poetry he really was, when—toward the end of his life—the despicable of our machine-era converted him into a celebrated literary hack.

Dr. Williams avows his predilection for "gentleness"; but he has breathed, for so long, the emanations of that saccharinity which pervades most small towns and is mistaken, by average Britons and Americans, for

love, that his poetry is replete with intimations that he has unconsciously grown to look on all softened moods as surrenders to self-desecration; and it is when he attempts the gentle that his poetry tends to falter and become flaccid, and even vapid. And for his emotions to be released without aesthetic sacrifices, he must be stirred to self-confidence by antagonisms of which he knows the worth; though, once aroused, the violence of his feeling is not destructive only because he is restrained by a maintained aesthetic integrity that is a precipitant of sardonic anti-climaxes often very fine art.

So has Rutherford wrought upon him—and he, we hope, upon Rutherford!—until, to-day, there is probably no living writer as superlatively right as he is at some precise second and as fantastically wrong in general perspective. And while his insights are as undependable as a blinding glare intermittently extinguished in dark, he has—despite limitations both of temperament and circumstances—managed, by an effort of will which is a nugatory defence of his most human side, to preserve intact a degree of the refreshing spontaneity innately his; and so has made of himself, without posturing, a creative personality to be remembered—the reviewer is convinced—by other generations than our own; who will be as amazed that his initial complete obscurity was protracted as we ourselves are that Whitman, also—whose antithesis he is!—was similarly consigned to virtual oblivion during a major portion of his life.

THE CELTIC NOTE

Reviewed by ROBERT GREACEN

A Celtic Miscellany. Translations by Kenneth Jackson, Routledge, 18s.
The Rent that's Due to Love. By Gwyn Williams, Poetry London, 7s. 6d.
Irish Poets of the Nineteenth Century. Edited by Geoffrey Taylor, Routledge, 12s. 6d.
The Arts in Ulster. A Symposium, Harrap, 10s. 6d.
Selected Poems. By Robert Farren, Sheed and Ward, 10s. 6d.
Reservations. Poems by Valentin Iremonger, Macmillan, 6s.

The main bulk of valuable poetry and prose in the Celtic languages belongs to the ancient past; they contain very little work by contemporary writers that may be considered outstanding. This should not surprise, since Cornish and Manx have died out as spoken languages; and the Scottish and Irish versions of Gaelic are only spoken naturally by tiny minorities. The official encouragement of Irish by successive Dublin governments has been too late to turn the tide. It is to be expected, then, that the majority of writers in Ireland and Scotland, who wish to catch

the ear of the world, should write in English. Welsh is still spoken, of course, but again few Welsh writers can afford to use the language of their fathers as a literary medium. It should hardly be controversial to say that there is no future for serious writing in any Celtic language, if only because there is no considerable public to read it.

But if Celtic literature has no future, then it has a great and a living past; and it is with the interpretation of this past that Professor Kenneth Jackson, of Edinburgh University, is concerned. To quote from his introduction:

> "The purpose of this book is to provide in the first place new translations, my own work, not to repeat those of others; and up-to-date ones, in accordance with the progress of modern Celtic scholarship. Then, to give selections not only from poetry but also from prose."

Each section ("Nature", "Bardic Poetry", "Winter" and so on) is briefly but admirably introduced. The scope of this scholarly undertaking will be appreciated by bearing in mind that six languages are involved, covering a period of thirteen centuries in the case of Welsh and Irish.

Professor Jackson refutes the still widely-held belief that the Celtic literatures are "full of mournful, languishing, mysterious melancholy, of the dim 'Celtic Twilight' (Yeat's term), or else of an intolerable whimsicality and sentimentality." He goes on to stress that mysticism and certainly sentimentality are not at all characteristic qualities. Exactness of natural description, economy of line (in the pictorial sense), and great imaginative quality based on observed fact are much more typical. The short and anonymous ninth-century poem, *The Coming of Winter*, is a good example:

> I have news for you; the stag bells, winter snows, summer has gone.
> Wind high and cold, the sun low, short its course, the sea running high.
> Deep red the bracken, its shape is lost; the wild goose has raised its accustomed cry.
> Cold has seized the birds' wings; season of ice, this is my news.

A Celtic Miscellany is a delightful anthology that should satisfy both the Celtic scholar and the general reader.

The title of Professor Gwyn Williams' interesting selection of Welsh poems (given both in the original and in the editor's own translation) is taken from the great Welsh poet of the fourteenth century, Dafydd Ap Gwilym:

> . . . seven accents of free delight
> seven diadems seven odes
> seven odes to slim Morfudd
> sprightly of body and seventy more.
> Thus she'll no more lock up
> the rent that's due to love.

Professor Williams admits that his choice, specimens ranging from the sixth to the nineteenth century, is purely personal and that "any unity observable in the selection is probably due to my instinctive protest against the religious blight that has fallen on Welsh poetry and Welsh taste since the Methodist revival of the 18th Century." His own translations will help to redress the balance in favour of pagan exuberance and magic.

Nineteenth-century poetry in Ireland has of late been neglected; and despite Mr. Taylor's learned pleading the reason is surely fairly obvious—much of the Irish verse of the last century was either pseudo-rhetorical or dull and pedestrian. Allingham (1824-1889), however, deserves to be rescued from mere token representation in the anthologies. Considered an Irish poet by such contemporaries as Tennyson, Irish critics, then and now, have tended to consider him English. In fact, he belongs, both by ancestry and inclination, to that social group known as the Anglo-Irish, which has contributed so abundantly to the literature of our language. Sir Samuel Ferguson, another Anglo-Irishman, is also well represented here. It is difficult to feel so happy about some of the minnows that Mr. Taylor has eagerly hauled into his net; it may be that a book half the size (and correspondingly cheaper) would have been more useful. But it would be churlish not to be grateful for the scholarship and zeal that has given too much rather than too little.

The Arts in Ulster, a well-illustrated symposium, surveys the principal arts in Northern Ireland, both in their historical and contemporary aspects. Mr. J. Nelson Browne's essay on Ulster poetry is admirably objective. He begins with Ferguson and Allingham, and ends with W. R. Rodgers and Roy McFadden.

Moving South of the Border one finds a strong contrast in the work of the two Dublin poets, Robert Farren and Valentin Iremonger. Mr. Farren, the elder of the two and Deputy Director of the Irish Radio Station, derives his subject matter and general approach from Gaelic and Roman Catholic sources. One's impression, however, is that Mr. Farren, in too consciously adopting a cultural and religious "attitude" has injected a propaganda undertone into his verse, and thus sets up a resistance in the reader.

Valentin Iremonger, on the other hand, has deliberately turned his back on the Gaelic past, largely because in Ireland it has been exploited for political reasons; naturally, he has no quarrel with genuine Gaelic culture. He is absorbed by the impact of contemporary life, being concerned alike with its public and private implications. Mr. Iremonger's technique is bright, jaunty, a trifle colloquial; in his less successful poems, the manner would seem to obscure true sensibility. He has learned much from Dylan Thomas and other modern poets without becoming a carbon copy. To my mind, he is the most promising poet now writing in Dublin.

SHORT REVIEWS

The Plot Succeeds by Austin Clarke (Williams and Norgate, 5s.).

Since Chatterton's Rowley Poems, published in 1777, with the notable exception of Swinburne's *Locrine* (1899), the practice of writing serious, as opposed to comic, dramatic matter in stanza and rhyme has fallen into abeyance. The grand tradition of the heroic play in couplets, that Dryden and Otway (in *Don Carlos*) carried into England from France, has subsided into the quiet and delicate charm of trifles like Dowson's *The Pierrot of the Minute* (1897). It is interesting therefore to note that the most distinguished Irish poet since Yeats has seen good in the present work (all but its prologue) to revive the custom of the rhymed play. But with a difference: it consists of modified heroic couplets, one of the rhyming words in each pair is dissyllabic and only the first syllable of it is rhymed. "Modified" heroics (remarkably) Often enough a line lacks a syllable, as so often in Lydgate and in Marlowe's *Edward II*; e.g.

Stop, stop.
Think of the cows that you have won, cropping

and

With flowers of May and led to the altar

Owing to natural accent the rhyming combinations do not force themselves on the ear when the play is read aloud and the effect is not unlike the blank verse of Fletcher thanks to the alternate feminine endings. The device, that may hark back to the internal rhyming that is a feature of early Irish and Welsh poetry and was not unknown to Chaucer before his Italian journey, is certainly effective in binding the paragraphs closely together and securing a structural formalism beyond the reach of all but the most accomplished writers of blank verse:

I do not believe in trickery of wave
Or tide. Our waves did what they could to save us
And prayer alone has caused this miracle.
Kneel down, Morgan, kneel down for Heaven tells us
By sudden prodigy that we have erred.
Then hurry home and when our souls are cured for
Our absent sons will strengthen us by pure
Example. Pangs may come—we can endure them;

This is not the movement of the heroic couplet at all, but of the blank verse of early Jacobean dramaturgy.

The matter of the play, 'a poetic pantomime' in six scenes and an epilogue, is more difficult to determine. It might have been called 'to alter the first word in one of Chatterton's titles' from *Metamorphosis*. The action is provoked by the machinations of that Proteus Manannaun Mac Lir 'the sea god, who prologues' and it concerns the reunion of Morgan Mor of Ulster and Dubeta his wife, between whom has come

Brandub of Leinster, who is fobbed off with a succubus for bride, impersonating Grainne, sister of Fergus, at the close. Characters appear as one another in the course of the piece, and the references to chess and abduction suggest the legend of Deirdre. It is the stuff of an epyllion that might have been worked into something like the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius, but the language is fresh, racy and of the soil, with nothing of the literary Macphersonese evident in Redwood Anderson's treatment of Irish matter (see *The Poetry Review*, November-December, 1950, pp. 336–7). The images are authentic and from nature, particularly in the dialogue between the two women (Scene II) and the Abbot's tirade (Scene VI):

> Think of Columcillè flying
> **Miraculously through the air in vombat**
> **With seven tempters. As the fiery scrum**
> Swept on, peninsulas were less than ink-blots
> A scholar wipes out with sand. Soon every chink
> Was cloud. Far off in Rome the Pope looked out
> From his high window, heard the demons shouting.
> **From Alp and Apennine, a storm of snow**
> Came round the sight. All glaciers were flowing . . .

The play was performed at the Abbey Theatre in February, 1950, and its nervous poetic vivacity shows that the Milesian saga is still vital and operative:

> Bend at this doorway, see the soul of Ireland:
> **A poor old woman praying by the fire.**
>
> (Scene V)

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN.

Lyrics from Nazaleda by Arthur Caddick (Fortune Press, 6s.)

This book's opening lyric, *The Illusive Hour*, impresses with its authenticity. There are no echoes: nothing derivative. The author evidently feels, thinks and writes, from himself: and with a few rare exceptions the note is sustained throughout the book's 32 pages. We are here, in short, with poetry—a fact at once pleasing and surprising in these later days of an age when several poets went up to fame like rockets, so to speak, and the sticks are now suitably with Fleet Street or Filmland or the B.B.C.

It is not that the poet's thought— as distinct from feeling—does not jar at times on a reviewer inclined to shrug his shoulders at evil beyond his, or apparently all, understanding. Perhaps it shouldn't jar. Youth—and Mr. Caddick must be comparatively young—feels the iniquities of our time, and hasn't the tolerance or, if you will, the indifference of age. And what matter, it may be argued, if Youth's protest is expressed in terms of poetry?

Well, it is a moot point and also impossible to thresh out thoroughly in a necessarily brief review. It may be that a lyric should express a personal emotion, as with that above mentioned, not an intellectual point of view which occasions doubt as to its truth. For instance, *Simple Song at Morning* states that

> Gone is morning's glow for ever
> From the twilit human heart,
> And no shafts of light may sever
> Man and mortal fear apart,

which is a mere expression of opinion and detracts from the value of what poetry *qua* poetry it has. Keats—although the somewhat lyrical *Grecian Urn* is, strictly speaking, an ode—arouses the same objection with his famous "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" dictum. It is questionable, again, if even a lyric expressive of emotion is perfect if pleasure in it is mingled with more or less antipathy to the emotion. Verlaine, "*pleurant sans cesse*", produces an exquisite lyric in *Sagesse*, but does not its excess of self-pity make it less exquisite than it might be?

These are points for reflection. If they imply that Mr. Caddick is being tried too highly they are also by way of being a further tribute to him. It should be enough to say that he is sensitive to beauty, and with the ability to represent it for the pleasure of readers who prefer beauty to cerebral excursions into obscure and meaningless regions where, certainly, "the sedge is withered by the lake" and no bird could possibly find it in its heart to sing.

He can be humorous, withal; as witness the sly humour of *Wadham*:

> We piped, canaries, in an infant forum,
> And scattered grains of learning were our groundsel:

the amusing lament, *Pastiche de mon Temps Perdu;* and, more implicitly here, *The Young Pretender*, a very *tour de force* of resignation to disillusion. It is to be hoped that this "slim volume" will help towards ending the revolution against the tradition of song and beauty—a revolution which, although doubtless salutary, has lasted far too long.

HENRY SAVAGE.

PRAYER

to be allowed to enter Paradise along with the Donkeys
(Translated from the French of Francis Jammes)

B. MARJORIE BALDWIN

When it is time, O my God, for me to come to Thee,
Let it be when the country is dusty with carnival:
I would wish that, just as I have done here below,
I may choose a path to come which pleases me
To Paradise, where the stars in broad daylight are shining.
I shall take my staff, and on the high-road
I shall go, and shall say to the donkeys my companions,
"I am Francis Jammes, and I am going to Paradise,
For there is no hell in the Good God's land."
I shall say to them, "Come, dear friends of the blue heaven,
Poor gentle beasts, who with a swift movement of your ears
Brush away the flies, the blows, and the bees . . ."
May it be among these beasts that I stand before Thee,
These beasts I love so much, who bend their heads
Gently, and when they stop put their little feet together
In so sweet a fashion that the heart is touched.
I shall reach Thee followed by their ears in thousands,
By those who are carrying big straw baskets,
And by those who are drawing showmen's carts,
Or carts of tins and feather-dusters;
By those who bear on their backs battered pots,
And by she-asses, great like wine-skins, with their step all broken,
By those on whom they put little trousers,
Because of the flies that torment them so.
My God, let it be among these that I come to Thee,
Let it be that in the stillness the angels may lead us
Towards tufted brooks where cherries tremble;
And let it be that, in this retreat of souls,
Leaning over Thy divine waters I may be like the donkeys
When they mirror their humble and guileless poverty
In the limpidity of the Eternal Compassion.

I DUB IT PASSION

JAMES BROCKWAY

Some call it love. I dub it passion
That rules me in this ruffian fashion,
Drives my feet, directs my eye,
Is the poison that I prosper by.

And you, my rough and surly charmer,
Dear redeemer, rude disarmer,
Can with the sigh, with the smile you give,
Command me: '*Perish*'; Summon me: '*Live.*'

TRUNK CALL

PAMELA CLEAVER

I will not sit facing its cold black suavity
While urgent seconds crawl across the pallid clock,
And from the desk it watches my hard tensed limbs
Crouched in seeming relaxation in the chair;
But crouched as an athlete taut for the sudden pistol crack.

My faltering fingers do uncertain things with wool,
I am busy—domestic—not waiting at all.
None can hear the fevered churning beat,
Or know the endless echoing peal of words,
That can not stop till stops my beating heart,
Or the black pigmy on the desk top rings.

Rings!
Over the severing acres of drugget,
From pistol to fluttering tape in a flash!
Winner? But possibly there is no prize.
Slowly I lift—My splintering calm
Achieves an aloof—a remote—"Hello!"

ART

FRED COGSWELL

Light bird of life
Your death is sealed
Even as we glimpse
The Form revealed:

Strong though you soar,
Marble, notes, words
Kill the brave flight
With static swords.

THE OVER-ENTERTAINED GUEST

J. J. CURLE

I hate all gossip, save my own,
All tenderness to others shown,
The long discoursive pointless story
That magnifies another's glory,
The dreary catalogue of deeds
Performed to serve another's needs,
And every laugh I cannot share,
—And other people everywhere.

SHE IS THE LAUGHTER

ANTHONY EDKINS

She chides me for my laughing eyes;
They flash—she calls them insincere.
She cannot know the sparkle dies,
That sorrow comes and then a tear,
When her eyes are not near.
She does not seem to realise
She *is* the laughter in my eyes.

THE ROOM

PHYLLIDA GARTH

I will remember the room
And the way light fell
On copper, china and wood,
And the summer smell
Of flowers stirring the air
Unstirred by sound,
And the quiet there,
Deeper than noiselessness,
Made of a mind that had found
Wisdom in loneliness.

I will remember the room
As I opened the door
And stood alone in the cool
And saw as never before
With a still, contented surprise,
A place to be grave and glad,
A place to be fond and wise
And a little sad.

I will remember the room
At the end of the day
When, with a backward look,
I went my way.

MANY LANDSCAPES

MADGE HALES

Your face is many landscapes,
So known, and yet so strangely not,
Each day new suns that rise
Praise what other suns forgot.

They climb fresh hills and forests,
Fields blow where shadows fringe your eyes;
Never the light's play fixed
But variously lies.

Fierce seasons burn their candles
Between the tiger and the dove:
In their dark flames I die
And resurrect my love.

THE RECONCILIATION

MICHAEL HAMBURGER

Their grief, though separate, was the same,
Bound each to the other, like a child,
Till—pride had wearied of the game—
Stranger to stranger was reconciled.

THE VALLEY

TERENCE HARDS

This was the island where she smiled,
And in this valley filled with stone
Caressed the serpents coiled about
Her limbs and heard the waters groan
For loneliness she would not feel.
So dwelling, she would sing alone:
"Life's hungry, desolate and dry,
Has come at last to be my own."

It's said that he came back for her,
One night, came back across the sea,
But that she only laughed and said:
"These many years I've come to see
That dwelling here is not a hell
And only you still sicken me."

NOCTUARY

TERENCE HEYWOOD

Bright is the night October
  When a colourful children stars
    Call as they play ball.
  In the heavens there are no bars,
So they play not in space's oases
But in desertlike drifts of distance
  That over the universe sprawl.

They trip from appointed sources
  To skip in the Milky Way,
And by orderly forces as horses
At circuses circle appropriate courses
  Arrive at length in array.

Does it matter if we in our limits
  Behold not the whole of the heaven?
We may glimpse in attempting to skim its
    Surface an essence whose presence
  Provides for our vision the leaven.

POEM

For E. M. M.

SYBIL HUSON

There was a child who laughing came to say
  With shocked delight—Poetry is my lover—
My heart is filled with joy of words, and day
And night the voices of the lovely few
Are proudly in my mind forever. You,
Knowing too this glory and this bright
Enchantment of the spirit, touched in light
Salute the dark enraptured head and gave
God-speed. The spring-time earth was newly brave,
And glad her step upon the sunlit way.

Passion bloomed before she came again
To say with old delight—Life is my lover—
And all the fierce green thrusts of twisted pain
Had pierced her shaken soul with swords of Spring.
Oh life, oh lovely life, the songs you sing
Possess my ravished mind till it is drowned,
In sweeping waves that break in crested sound.
Listen, can you hear it too? And you,
With careful tenderness, already knew
This melody of passion dark with pain.

AFTER A POEM BY CATULLUS

FRANK LISSAUER

Had I three thousand friends? Have I but one?
Dreams are they, dreams. Deceive yourselves no more,
Desiring merit, gratitude; must shun
These trifles, guard your hearts, for man's so poor
Of soul, the whole world misers his small thanks.
To have done well, is ill, for hindering worse.
Friends to profess, is to hold them by a curse—
Escaped, they leave man where he friendless sinks.

Who said he loves me, leaves me, poorer than poor.

ALFRED'S SONG

If thu havest seorewe, ne seye thu hit nouht thun arewe, seye hit thine sadelbowe and ryd the singinde forth.

Proverbs of Alfred, 14.

GEORGE MOOR

What time the dark invaders came,
The ranks of Wessex beaten down,
Northumbria's holy halls in flame,
And the king roamed without a crown,

Over the hills, beneath the trees,
  Rode a rider with flowing hair,
Racing bright-eyed the wild Spring breeze:
  One of those who know not care!

For he sang as he rode along
  Through the dapple of light and shade,
And this was the burden of his song
  To the music the swift hooves made:

  When sorrow's yours, the aching woe
  To no other heart display,
  But tell it to your saddle-bow
  And singing ride away.

By bright fen waters rode he on.
  He had nowhere to lay his head,
But where a peasant's hearth-fire shone
  Each evening he would beg his bread.

Blithely beneath Spring's budding trees
  Rode vanquished England's darling on,
And the birds poured upon the breeze
  This music when the king had gone:

  When sorrow's yours, the aching woe
  To no other heart display,
  But tell it to your saddle-bow
  And singing ride away.

THE GREAT AGREEMENT

PHILIP A. STALKER

Seek not the paradise of fools
Pretending unity,
But let us in our several schools
Agree to disagree,
And through that great agreement find
The balanced Universal Mind.

WHITE CHRISTMAS

JOHN SIBLY

Now the snow's white rigours
Have laid their ban
On all country colours
And all sounds of man,

And like plumed seeds the crows
In the bald sky
Over the frail-foamed snows
Aloft, aloof, fly,

Men tread the muffled ways
Quietly as shadows
By the mute marble trees
And quilted meadows.

All sound is lost
And all distinction
Of colour and odour
In this extinction.

Yet beneath the insistence
Of the snow we can trace
Still the oak's persistence,
And still the beech's grace.

And under the glistening
Snow snakes, which cling
To each bough, the chestnut listening,
Prick-eared, for spring.

ARABIAN SUNSET

VALENTINE GRAYCE

I heard an Arab singing
Beside his tented home at dusk:
His ululating voice was amber,
And his tune was musk.

WINTER DEATH

REX TAYLOR

Low in the shadows by the wall,
The fox crouched till rime's silver pall
Formed heavy on his matted flanks;
Then rose, and shook himself, and eyed
The strutting fowl that now defied
The silence and the shadows' banks.

A clutch of feathers, and a track
Of blood, and paw-prints moving back
Across the field towards the wall:
These, till the sun eradicates,
No other eye than mine translates
From silence and rime's silver pall.

THE BALLAD OF BARDON MILE*

E. A. GIBBONS-POLE

Lived a miner of Hoo Ash
(*Wet 'ole, gi'in' cole,*[1] *my butty*)
Could love or faight, an' he wore rash.
Would drink the night an' he had cash
(*There's Monday gone,*[2] *my son.*)

Red o' the comb[3] he made his game,
The City of Dan had known his shame
And many a bairn as lacked 'is name.

But Brash wore collier born an' bred,
Could use 'is pick nor lose 'is yead,
'D slot 'is coles an' lay 'em dead.

None else could faster strip a stall
Nor'd more pit sense o' fire an' fall,
Of wayter an' the Great White Wall.[4]

*Notes on this most original poem have been provided by the author and are to be found at its conclusion.—Ed.

"The firin' pony's[5] walked inbye,
The tallowed beastie's run outbye—
Come Brash, nor stint the tented sky."[6]

"An' I had wings and I would bat[7]
The Monument to Battle Flat
Nor hell-fire bring me rue or rat,

An' I had wings and I would fill
Fr' Botany Bay to Charley Mill
Fall hafe the stone o' Bardon Hill,

But by Our Lady of the Mount[8]
Come bless the Hazel Wand o' Lount[9]
At the Dieu Mercie o' Fone Hill Fount[10]

So darklin' Robin smells the lift[11]
Hard by where I mun stan' my shift
My grandam druv the Barrow Drift—

An' Billa Barrow's middlin' deep,
An Barrow's murky wayters keep
The shift that seven miners sleep!"

"Nay Brash, I'll lay a siller boll[12]
Twixt Barrow an' the Nether Mole
There's thirty cuts o' good sea-cole!"[13]

They've made their stall an' stomped the dip
That set the gassy balls[14] askip
The whiles the roof went drip, drip, drip.

Brash fobbed 'is snap an' muffler by,
Re-sot a bar as leaned awry,
Dropped down a rate[15] as looked to fly.

'E's druv a wedge an' druv it true,
The coles 'ave drawed, the ringer's flew,
A jummer[16]—*an' the wayter's through!*

Brash i'nna mind to look nor list,
'Is butty's stopped a mort o' fist
That speeds 'is legs nor where they wist.

The tunnelled dark's a leaden spate,
There's wayter up the barrer-gate[17]
An' wayter be's the bowels that wait.[18]

The bottom's snythed[19] wi' steamin' men,
There's three to raise the sun—and then
The corf[20] is swingin' up again.

Brash and 'is mate 'ave won outbye[21]
But murder's in the collier's eye—
"Where's Robin?"—and he's back inbye.

—O passin' the love o' womenkind—
Brash bent inbye the beast to find
Nor grutched[22] the chance as lay behind.

An' "Robin" rings the tented lift,
An' "Robin" down the teemin' drift
Where Robin makes his last long shift.

Three times the drippin' hemp is paid,
Three times the smokin' flanks are flayed,[23]
Three times the empty corf is weighed . . .

* * *

The cowman's wench at Limbey Hey
Has wed an' cast her weeds away
Within a twelve-month and a day.

The farmer's lass o' Cademan Hill
Has chose to lay her lone an' till
The dowery of her father's will.

The squire's daughter, she wore pale,
(*Wet 'ole, gi'in' cole, my butty*)
At Ulverscroft[24] confessed her tale,
Vowed her last vow an' took the veil,
(*There's Monday gone my son.*)

E. A. GIBBONS-POLE

THE BALLAD OF BARDON MILE

AUTHOR'S NOTES

These verses are an experiment in time. I have often been surprised that there should remain (if indeed there have ever been?) no ballads of the coalfields. A good deal of research and three years practical experience at the pit face have gone to the writing of this, together with a study of the North Leicestershire dialect. Also a certain amount of guesswork—might I even say scientifically based guesswork—has been used to try and get at the root of a number of obscure pit words and phrases.

I have attempted, without slavishly copying existent works, to create atmosphere and action with a minimum of trimmings and in this the very subject has helped. The miner is direct in his speech and action, in his emotions, in his life and in his hates and loves.

For the material part of the story, all the place names are fact and Bardon Mile and Billa Barrow Drift could have existed and been lost to the present. (Often in 'heading' are found traces of mines not charted and of which no surface traces remain.)

There are a number of discrepancies deliberately put in to show that this ballad was written at second hand (that is to say by one who had not actually been a miner) and also that the story had been factually altered from time to time. In my enthusiasm to compound my own felony I have even written the following notes:

1. 'Wet 'ole gi'in' cole'. *Givin'* (Lit. *giving* and pronounced with a hard *g* in a diversity of vowel sound ranging from *geen* to *gain*) means 'easy' and it is a fact that where water follows the drill better coaling follows. In common use today, the expression was obviously put in here to create atmosphere.
2. 'There's Monday gone.' Probably the first joke dating from the first 'turning shift', it never stales and expresses very aptly the finality of the descent into the bowels of the earth from which there is no release until the shift's end.
3. 'Red o' the comb.' *Young*—almost certainly dating back to the old cock-fighting days.
4. 'The Great White Wall.' The well known Thringstone Fault—still referred to by the old Leicestershire miners as the White Wall.
5. 'The firin' pony.' Before the advent of the safety lamp men were sent through the workings holding naked lights above their heads to fire the gas that collected in holes in the roof. Later donkeys (not, so far as is known, ponies!) were used with tallow dips strapped to their backs. There are some grounds for the theory that the pit 'deputy' derived his name from this practice.
6. 'Stint the tented sky.' *Stint*—used here in the sense of *regret* in some manner became linked with the word *grudge* and ultimately the word *stint* itself came to mean the *ratch* or hard-won tonnage of coal gained by each miner. *Tented sky*—Bardon Mile may have been a bell-pit and looking up from the pit bottom would have had this effect. (*cf.* Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Gaol.")
7. 'An' I had wings an' I would bat.' *Hurry.* 'To bat your wings' still used although the more usual term is '*bulling*'. (*cf. Bull-week*—the week before any holiday when the miner tries to put that little extra into his pay packet.)
8. 'Lady of the Mount.' Not necessarily dating this story back to the days when England was a Catholic country, the more probable explantaion is the influence of the Catholic community that settled in these parts after the potato famine in Ireland. Reference in verse 1 to the City of Dan which is part of Whitwick near St. Bernard's Monastery gives strength to the argument.
9. 'Hazel Wand of Lount.' The local water diviner.
10. 'Fone Hill Fount.' There is a natural fresh water spring near Fone Hill today.
11. 'So darklin' Robin smells the lift.' Miners looking after pit ponies—still used locally today—insist that their charges have some instict for weather on the bank—particularly during a thunderstorm.
12. 'Boll.' A measure of coal fixed by the Society of Free Hosts in Newcastle about the year 1204. The exact weight is not known because it was altered from time to time in an attempt to evade the coal tax.
13. 'Sea-cole.' Dating back a thousand years or more to the time when coal was salvaged from the outcroppings washed up on the shores of our coast, the name was still in use in the early part of the last century.
14. 'Gassy balls.' White fungus growing from roofs and timbers in old or damp workings, wrongly supposed to have contained poisonous gases. They would not, however, have been found in a newly worked stall as suggested here.
15. 'A rate.' Falling fronts on a new cut face or (as in this case) a handholed stall.
16. 'A jummer.' When a large mass of coal drops solidly to the floor without breaking.
17. 'Barrer gate.' Again dating back considerably before the time of this ballad when barrows or sleds with skids were used by boys and women to take the coals from the face. Like many other words it survived to a far later date.
18. 'Wayter be's the bowels that wait.' A play on the old Biblical expression—variations of which still exist—denoting extreme fear.
19. 'Snythed.' (Occasionally *snyved*) meaning *crowded.* Still in use today among the farming community in speaking of good fruit crops or heavy insect pests.
20. 'The Corf.' The basket by means of which men and coal were hauled from the pit bottom to the bank. It is interesting to note that although this is apparently a bell-pit mention is made of Robin, the pit pony. Generally speaking ponies were only used where entrance to the workings was down a drift or foot-road and the later bell-pits relied entirely on manual labour until the age of steam and the introduction of the larger pit cage. Even so the possibility of lowering a pony by rope and harness cannot be completely ruled out.
21. 'Won outbye.' The two words *win* and *gain* and their derivatives have long been associated with the idea of anything accomplished in mining engineering.
22. 'Grutched.' *Begrudged*—still in common use in both North Leicestershire and South Derbyshire.
23. 'The Smokin' flanks are flayed.' Horse-driven gins and windlasses were used in those days to operate the simple winding gear at the pit head.
24. 'Ulverscroft.' Ruins of a priory of that name still remain on the borders of the Charnwood Forest.

E.A.G.P.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

Mr. Jack Lindsay is surely a little ungrateful for my full and highly appreciative notice of Dr. Edith Sitwell's *Façade* (to which he contributed so polemical an introduction). That notice was twice or thrice as long as the space given to each of the other eight books considered in my article, but evidently it was not long enough for Mr. Lindsay.

Dr. Sitwell is no damsel in distress, requiring reams of knight-errantry to lead her into public recognition. Her work is, I allow, a good peg on which to hang the sort of argument in which Mr. Lindsay so copiously and portentously delights; but he had his exhaustive say in his introduction and I said quite enough about it, in the space at my disposal, to send interested readers to the book itself.

But it is a strange contention to come from so revolutionary and untraditional a critic that Tennyson and his contemporaries were, by inference, un-English in writing like themselves and not like Blake, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, while Dr. Sitwell is "fully *English*" in deriving one aspect of her poetic method from Baudelaire and Rimbaud. I have always favoured an intelligent and discriminating traditionalism, whether the sources suffer a sea-change on the other side of the Channel or not.

I would hand on a platter to Mr. Lindsay my belief that the early Edith Sitwell of *Façade* and *Bucolic Comedies* knew no more in what ultimate direction—'English' or otherwise—she was going when she coquetted so creatively with the French development than the early T. S. Eliot did when he abandoned Imagism and 'lifted' from Albert Lièvre. Movements—intentional and unconscious—reveal themselves in the perspective of time, and the 'betrayals' and 'falsifications' of one age are often canonised by later generations.

I am, etc.,
WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR.*

*Apologies are due to Mr. Kean Seymour for not printing his sixteen-line poem, *Ghost in Garden* in four separate quatrains in Mr. John Waller's article, *The Haunted Rose-Garden of William Kean Seymour* in the last issue. —Ed.

THE SHIRLEY CARTER GREENWOOD PRIZE : 1950

ADJUDICATION REPORT BY

THOMAS MOULT

There is goodness in much of the work submitted for the Greenwood Prize: 1950; but the manifestations of it are fleeting, seldom sustained by the authors with the exception of Hugh Morris, whose poem of 214 lines is an adventurous, consistent narrative, which enriches the reader with a feeling that here is something like authentic poetry, not regulated prose. For "Impact", therefore, I award the prize.

Major Morris has based the work on an incident which occurred while he was on active service in Abyssinia during the second World-War. It is, alas, an ever-recurring incident, unavoidable as long as human beings, civilised or not civilised, use only one ultimate argument in a discordant time—the never-justifiable argument of brute force at its most bestial:

> " . . . and then war comes again
> And the wild Ethiop turns his angry skill
> From peaceful labour and pursuit of gain
> To the one huge desire to wound and kill,
> Slaughtering, burning, pillaging without thought
> Except to free his land of all invasion
> And to possess in freedom his own life.

But if the poem was concerned merely with the "wild Ethiop" there would be no dreadfulness in the transformation from peace to battle. "Impact" is symbolic, and so is the tragic story of "sweet Maryam". The delicacy and restraint, the pity aroused, the sorrow of helplessness—these are the qualities that entitle me to regard the author as an artist.

> "Of the dark soldiers who marched across the plains
> In all Ambo no single trace remains."

Not a trace remains of the armed brutes (who once were men) marching across the plains of all the earth—marching, marching across millions of years.

None of the other poems that have been entered left me with the inward glow. But I will mention "The Immigrants" by Carol Brown, a homely pastoral, and "Under the Pole", ambitious and cosmically vaporous. Again the long poem is ubiquitous: the search for a prize-worthy short lyric continues.

THE GREENWOOD PRIZE POEM : 1950

IMPACT

An evening in Ambo, Abyssinia, July 1941.

BY HUGH MORRIS

A green and pleasant land
  Marred only by the hollow, blackened shells
    Of empty houses, raped and ruined homes.
    The pointed domes
Of grass-thatched tukuls still profusely stand
  Untouched by time. So often history tells
Ambition's tale in ruins, while the tale
  Of simple folk stays painted on the scene,
Live-written across every hill and dale,
    Long after all the marshals and the kings
  Have died and mouldered. Where their deeds have been
The passing gossip of the market-place
    Soon all the ordinary, simple things
  Return; once more time's slow, avenging tide
With strong, unhurried and deliberate pace
Wipes out the forts and castles they have made
  In pitiless advance, slowly to subside
Leaving no trace behind. The flashing blade
    Lies rusted and unnoticed in the grass,
    Emblem of all brief things which come and pass.

Two thousand years the bearded Ethiop
  Had built his rounded homes upon these hills
Since the proud Roman, with brazen bird atop
  His glittering helm, had tamed the wayward rills
    Into a leaden fountain and a pool
Of rough-hewn masonry. The pool remained:
    The Roman soldier, hard ambition's tool,
  With round shield, eagles and short two-edged sword,
Had passed forgotten. All the blood that stained
  The roads and rivers, the loud, hateful word
Of harsh command, all had been washed away

By the great floods of life and love and laughter.
The people go on living, and each day
Forget the past nor care for the hereafter.
More eagles come, this time with gas and guns
And bombs that fall noisily from the sky
Slaughtering him who stays and him who runs;
Man, woman and child choke, burn and die.
Then come the workmen and the men who till
The ground with smelly, noisy, rattling ploughs,
Men who build houses with a startling skill,
Doctors and priests, tall horses and straight-backed cows.
The screaming death and poison's hurtful cloud
Give place to sounds of husbandry and home;
The soldiers' measured march and all the proud
Pomp make way for happy feet that roam
Freely on friendly lands and well-tilled soil:
They stay to bless who came at first to spoil.

Four years pass by, and then war comes again
And the wild Ethiop turns his angry skill
From peaceful labour and pursuit of gain
To the one huge desire to wound and kill,
Slaughtering, burning, pillaging without thought
Except to free his land of all invasion
And to possess in freedom his own life.
Reckless of death, heedless of all persuasion,
He kills and burns, intent on mortal strife.
All the invaders' toil to dust is brought,
The houses and the people all destroyed.
He wreaks his vengeance on their land and cattle
And every wickedness is then deployed
For lust of slaughter and delight of battle.

Only Tullù stayed quiet and apart,
Tullù with Maryam his laughing wife.
There was no room in his too loving heart
For hate and murder or for furious strife.
He stayed beside the embers that still glowed
Where Maryam had cooked his evening meal
And from his open door the red light showed
The warmth of happiness which he could feel
Filling his mind and body with content.
The slow blue smoke that made its upward way

Into the dim blue night seemed, as it went
  Heavenward, like incense helping him to pray
    Blessings for Maryam, like a hymn of love
    Slowly ascending to the skies above.

So in the firelight stayed Tullù and dreamed,
  Nor heard the distant beating of the drums
Nor saw the thousand shining threats that gleamed
  In splintered moonlight bayonetted. So comes
Stealthily and unknown the marching fate
  Of viewless Then upon the peaceful Now;
The lover's dream is wakened into hate
  And none knows why or when or foresees how.
The singing soldiers march, and at their side
  Run laughing children; happy women smile
Unmindful of the future undescried
  When destiny comes masked and full of guile.

What destiny brought Maryam to the road
  When the tall soldiers marched into the town?
What made her laugh, or place her heavy load
  Down on the ground? Why did her muslin gown
Catch moonbeams, and so turn the soldier's eye
  From darkness to a sudden quick delight,
Waking a swift desire? Sweet Maryam, why
  Of all the women laughing in the night
    Did he see you, while him you failed to see?
    Why could not you evade fate's harsh decree?

Tullù beside his glowing embers stayed
  And Maryam returning found him still
Lost in a dream. The curling smoke still prayed
  And the dark tukul brooded love. Her will
For life and laughter fought with her desire
  For home and the enfolding peace of love.
She placed more wood upon the dying fire
  And saw the sparks leap upward, where above
    The wreathing smoke dark hidden rafters stood.
    She breathed the incense of the burning wood.
But as Tullù still lingered and still dreamed
  She feared to rouse him. Out into the night

Maryam went. The whole firmament seemed
To stand above her, clear in the moon's soft light,
Like the vast roof of an immenser home
Housing the whole wide world; no single soul
Was homeless under the huge friendly dome
Of sky star-raftered which, without need of pole
Or beam, spread out its generous embrace
Over infinity. With youthful grace
She raised her hands, palms up, to heaven above
And sang soft praises to the God of love.

So standing, came upon her unaware
The soldier who had seen her moonlit gown
And stooping loveliness, and stayed to stare
Amazed at her young beauty. Bending down
He crept toward her, silent, unheard, unseen,
While all around the tranquil village slept.
The stealthy soldier, like a beast unclean
From steaming forest, to his victim crept
And with no warning, with no smallest sound
Leapt, and in silence bore her to the ground.

Meanwhile in the white house upon the hill
Beneath the same white moon and starry sky
The old Ligaba sat, happy and still,
With the English captain. Maryam longed to die
There on the hard ground; happy Tullù dreamed,
While the dark soldier stealthily returned
To the unheeding camp. The moonlight gleamed
On the tukul where the red embers burned,
On the white house as the Ligaba left
To take his homeward way, and on the ground
Where Maryam lay, of every hope bereft
And in unyielding misery tightly bound.

The moon shone down on her despairing face
And threw a shadow under each round breast
And lighted up the soft, relaxing grace
Of her young limbs spread in uneasy rest.
The firelight in the tukul flickered and died
And Tullù woke and knew that he was cold,

While the Ligaba came with an old man's pride
Back to the home where he had lived and grown old.
Tullù rose up and went into the night
And saw his Maryam in the cold moonlight.

When Maryam saw Tullù she turned her head
Slowly away from him, and Tullù knew,
Not knowing how or why. All dreaming fled
And a vast sadness and huge anger drew
Black darkness round him. With one shuddering cry
He leapt to Maryam there on the hard ground
And fell beside her. One long, pitiful sigh
She gave, and turned from him. No other sound
Escaped Tullù; no sound did Maryam make.
There was a silence neither dared to break.

The sleepy village heard that shuddering cry
And woke in fear, waiting to hear again
Some dreadful echo, but the pitiful sigh
None heard, save only that a pain
Of sorrow spread itself upon the air
And terror went with it. Whether the silent fear
Or the loud cry reached the white house and there
Woke swift response none knows. A sudden spear
Of horror pierced the captain's startled mind
And sent him running swiftly down the hill
Not knowing why, but sure that he would find
Some urgent duty that he must fulfil.

Tullù and Maryam he quickly found
And thought them dead. Carefully in strong arms
He lifted Maryam tenderly from the ground
And bore her to the dark tukul. Alarms
Of death and the rough ways of life
Aroused no fear in his accustomed mind,
But Maryam was not dead; no eddying fight
Surged round him in the dark; he could not find
One enemy to strike at; only she

Lay listless in his arms. No urgent fight
Filled him with angry courage. He could see
No lurking foe there in the quiet night,
But only Maryam, with her muslin torn,
Soft in his arms, sorrowful and forlorn.

Gently he laid her on her own soft bed
And knelt beside her. Even when Tullù came
Still he knelt silent. Tullù's mind was dead
To present thought. He stirred to fretful flame
The cooling embers, then he too knelt down
And laid his head upon the muslin gown.

There in the silence and the flickering light
The captain left them. Smoke that rose in prayer
Came down again in blessing. The cool night
Breathed peace upon them, and the cold night air
Whispered between them, bringing back love's own peace
In which all sorrow ends and troubles cease.

When the sun rose upon the Shoan hills
The soldiers marched away toward the west;
Village and valley echoed the parting thrills
Of drum and song, and sank again to rest.
The old Ligaba once again held sway,
Issuing law and justice, and the plough
Went slowly on its old accustomed way
While children went to fetch the patient cow.
Then Maryam turned to Tullù where he knelt
Beside her, and her heart knew love again,
But Tullù said no word. Too deeply felt,
There are no words for human love and pain.
Of the dark soldiers who marched across the plains
In all Ambo no single trace remains.

PREMIUM COMPETITION REPORT

(New Series: No. 6.)

The entries to the Competition which closed on 15th April, if they did not quite reach three score in number—a blessing for the judge!—reached at least a most welcome high level of accomplishment and originality. So high, in fact, was the general performance that the final selection most uncomfortably strained the cogs of cogitation. However, if Mr. Caddick wins the prize for his memorable nobly-phrased Sonnet, he will not cavil, I feel sure, that a dozen bunched on his withers to an almost photo-finish, notably Mr. Bratton, nakedly sincere and painfully poignant with *Asylum Visit*; Miss Cumming, lissomly lyrical; and Mr. Kabraji, deepening the sensitivity he first exposed in his volume, *A Minor Georgian's Swan Song*.

JOHN GAWSWORTH.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Frederick Bratton, Harlesden.
Pamela Cleaver, Kensington.
O. Culshaw, Blackburn.
Isobel Cumming, Birmingham.
Frances Harland, Cheshire.
Fredoon Kabraji, Kensington.
Jean Kenward, Herts.
D. P. Kirtlan, Wilts.
H. V. S. Page, Liverpool.
Celia Randall, Co. Down.
Malcolm H. Tattersall, Bexhill.
F. M. Venables, Bognor Regis.

WORDS

It is a mystery of words that poets keep,
Words which weave a fabric round their feeling,
Words begetting passion, as they leap
Bright to the brain and send the senses reeling.
Words may work as instruments of healing,
Words may wound and stab their daggers deep,
Words may rush to inmost heart's revealing,
Words lull black longings of the heart to sleep.
This is a mystery from earth's first season.
The wary Greeks would hold the gods to pity
By letting evil things be spoken well.
The secret name of one immortal city
Was kept by priests and sold to foe by treason
And when the word was breathed the city fell.

ARTHUR CADDICK.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN : POETRY SOCIETY READINGS

The first three (of six) Special Readings to Commemorate the Festival of Britain, produced under the auspices of the Poetry Society, were warmly received at Herringham Hall, Bedford College, Regents Park, N.W.1, on 6th May (*Elizabethan Poetry*); 3rd June (*Caroline Poetry*) and 1st July (*The Western Hemisphere*).

Tickets for the forthcoming recitals at Herringham Hall, Bedford College, at 3 p.m. on:

Sunday, 5th August: *The Nineteenth Century*
Sunday, 2nd September: *Poetry of Empire*
Sunday, 7th October: *Modern Poetry*

are obtainable (2/- per Reading for non-members, 1/- for members) from the Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

(*Herringham Hall, Bedford College, is a few minutes' walk from York Gate, the first entrance to Regent's Park past Baker Street Station. The hall is at the rear of the main building of Bedford College.*)

POETRY HOUR PROGRAMMES

Recent Poetry Hours had stimulating diversity, often enterprising. 20th April, Leigh Henry made intimately informed survey of "The Yellow Book Period"—too long neglected—estimating it as iconoclastic prelude to fresh initiatives rather than decadence. His personal contacts with many of its protagonists added interest, extended by those, in a later poetic generation, of his co-reader, John Gawsworth. John Graddon's Discussion Evening refreshed by its frank, independent roster, Evelyn Bangay, Geraldine Kalka-Cash, T. H. Foley and Leigh Henry. 4th May, A. V. Burbury arranged a reading entitled "Satire Ancient and Modern". "Machinery in Poetry," 11th May, arranged by T. H. Foley and Leigh Henry eulogised and execrated the mechanist age in poems effectively, often dynamically read by Pamela Barnard, Daphne Thompson, David Holmes and Jack MacCreath.

Poetry Song-Time, programme-series of poetry and music for young people, planned schematically and organised by Leigh Henry, and launched auspiciously by "Places and People", continued successfully with "Sea and Ships", 5th May. Songs, community choruses and dulcitone playing by the organiser aided the aim to help us "see with our ears". Eye had interest also, however, in coloured drawings by Leigh Henry —sea-horses, mermaids, smugglers, Hornblower-period Navy captains, Hook-like, sinister pirates —for which the audience scrambled afterwards. Also shown were coloured postcard screens of ships of all ages; a needlework ship-picture by a Trafalgar bo'sun and, rare trophy, a ship model made by Masefield himself for Sir Flinders Petrie's children. Kynaston Reeve, guest reader, added his stage and screen artistry (also quite juvenile zest in some piratical poems), to the reading roster. This—Geraldine Kalka-Cash, Fanny Moore, Yorke Crompton, T. H. Foley and John Graddon—contributed sensitive, stirring and humorous readings of De Vere, Flecker, Margaret Glyn, Leigh Henry, Lear, Lowry, Hamish Maclaren Masefield, Moore, William Sharp, James Stephens and E. H. Visiak. Special feature was Class II, St. Matthias' School, Kensington, reciting their *Evening News* award-winning Festival Poem, written jointly after the first Poetry Song-Time programme.

THE POETRY SOCIETY : LECTURERS

It has been suggested at the General Executive Council to invite any persons interested and willing to become lecturers to communicate direct with the Secretary, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

CENTRES

THE BATH POETRY CLUB

Enquiries to: James Angell, Esq., Bedwyn, Westbury Avenue, Combe Down, Bath, Somerset.

THE BOSTON POETRY CENTRE

Meetings held monthly. Full details from: Miss Blanche J. Bigelow, 163 Eliot Street, Milton 87, Mass.

THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to the General Secretary and Treasurer: Mrs. T. Weston Ramsey, 89 Poplar Avenue, Hove.

Fixtures every third Saturday in the month at the Glenside Hotel, 65 Grand Parade, Brighton. Readings at 4-30 until 6 p.m., (and it is hoped to start a Children's Section from 3 p.m. until 4 p.m., previous to the Adult Meeting). Tudor Café attached. Refreshments if desired.

On April 21st, the Centre welcomed the editor of *The Poetry Review*, John Gawsworth, F.R.S.L. His informal reading of the poetry of his years of peace, crisis and war, contained in *Collected Poems*, gained him a most sympathetic audience. His visit was further marked by a dual Chairmanship, the President of the Poetry Society, T. W. Ramsey, F.R.S.L., introducing the guests and the poet of *Buccaneer Ballads* and distinguished Milton scholar, E. H. Visiak, conveying the Centre's thanks.

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CENTRE

14th July—2-45 p.m.:

Difficult modern poems.

Miss E. D. Bangay, Tilehurst Cottage, White Hill. Chesham 387. 362 Bus to Codmore Cross.

THE CHELSEA POETRY CIRCLE

(Affiliated to the Poetry Society. Formed 1946)

President:
Dame Sybil Thorndike

Vice-President:
Miss Margaret Rawlings

Informal readings are held each month in members' homes, and occasional public readings at the National Trust Museum, 3 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, S.W.3. Full particulars from the *Hon. Secretary,* John E. Carroll, 5 Redesdale Street, S.W.3.

THE EALING POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to: The Secretary, 3 Grafton Road, Acton, W.3.

THE FLORIDA POETRY CENTRES

(Formed 1946)

President General:
Marie Tello Phillips
6427 Darlington Rd.,
Pittsburgh 17, Pa., U.S.A.

Vice-President General:
Lillie Reed Zortman
230 Forest Ave., Ben Avon,
Pgh. 2, Pa., U.S.A.

State Presidents:

Connecticut: Lille Offen Reed.
Florida: Pearl Safford.
Indiana: Grace Porterfield Polk.
Kentucky: Ethel Koger.
Maine: Effie Lawrence Marshall.
Minnesota: Margarette Dickson.
Pennsylvania: Lillie Reed Zortman.
Tennessee: Polly McKibben.

THE GUILDFORD POETRY CENTRE

Details of meetings may be obtained from The Centre Secretary, Mrs. F. E. Coker, 20 Litchfield Way, Guildford, Surrey.

THE HAMPSTEAD POETRY CENTRE (1909)

Meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays in each month at 8–9-30 p.m., at 9 Wentworth Mansions, Keats Grove, N.W.3., and the following Programme has been arranged:

19th July: *Miscellaneous Poems.*

THE LEWES POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to the Secretary and Treasurer: G. C. Price, 22 Sutton Road, Seaford, Sussex.

The Centre reports an interesting and successful season. Meetings have been held in the Friends' Meeting House, Lewes, where next season's gatherings, commencing early in the Autumn, will also assemble.

THE MANCHESTER POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to the Secretary: Mrs. B. Sterling, 25 June Street, Manchester, 13. Meetings are held at the Midland Hotel, the third Wednesday in each month at 6-30 p.m.

THE NORTHERN IRELAND POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to: Miss H. Haddock, 18 Ashley Gardens, Belfast.

THE NOTTINGHAM POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to: Lake Aske, Esq., 281 Wilford Lane, Nottingham.

THE REIGATE POETRY CENTRE

Details of Meetings may be obtained from the Centre Secretary, Mrs. M. A. Hicks, The Alton, Alma Road, Reigate.

THE ST. PETERSBURG (U.S.A.) CENTRE

(Formed 1946)

Members and potential members are invited to communicate with the President, Helen T. Douglas Robinson, 815 Jackson Street North, St. Petersburg, 6, Florida. The Centre seeks to promote production of the best in poetry.

THE SOUTHAMPTON POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to:—Miss Joy Brider, 9 Archers Road, Southampton.

THE STROUD CENTRE

For particulars of Membership, please apply to the Hon. Secretary of the Stroud Poetry Centre at Steanbridge, Slad, Nr. Stroud.

THE WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to:—Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens, 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge, Surrey.

On 3rd May, an able talk on *Poetic Drama* was given by John Gittens, B.A., followed by an enjoyable and keen discussion.

On 31st May, Dorian Cooke, author of *Fugue for Our Time*, read from his own works and was warmly received.

Meetings are held at 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge (near Walton Bridge) the fourth Thursday in each month at 8 p.m. All interested are welcome.

Will anyone able and willing to start a Centre in any part of the country please communicate with the Secretary, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

POETS' GROUP OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

This Group, dedicated to furthering the work of active Poets within the Society, gathers "to hear each other's work and discuss the spirit and substance of poetry." All interested in attending future meetings are invited to communicate with me at The Well House, Ewell, Surrey. LEIGH HENRY

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S CRITICAL SERVICE

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing the continuance of its Critical Service for Members. Two poems only may be submitted for criticism, for a minimum fee of 5s. The charge for the criticism of each additional poem is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S AUDITIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

The Poetry Society has conducted auditions and examinations in the art of verse-speaking for many years, and its success in this valuable cultural activity is attested by the fact that the number of schools and institutions in all parts of England which the Society examines, continually increases.

Junior preliminary examinations are available for the youngest children and these continue through various grades, up to the final test for adult students, for which the Society's gold medal is the final award for success.

General regulations governing these auditions may be obtained on application to The Registrar, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, with whom arrangements can be made for auditions for schools, colleges, or private individuals.

COMPETITIONS

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITION FOR 1951

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editor, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*.

Closing date is 31st December, 1951.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above bi-monthly competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 15th August, 1951.

THE HOWARD PARSONS' EPIGRAM COMPETITION: 1952

The Poetry Society is empowered by Mr. Howard Parsons, a long-standing member of the Society, to offer the following prizes, endowed by him for an Epigram Competition.

1st prize, 5 guineas; 2nd prize, 2 guineas; 3rd prize, 1 guinea. Entries which should not have been previously published should be marked "Epigram" and should not bear a stamped addressed envelope, as MSS. cannot be returned. They should be addressed to The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, to reach here not later than 1st March, 1952. The Society reserves the right to extend the closing date of the competition should none of the entries reach the required standard.

SUBMISSIONS TO THE EDITOR

Manuscripts may be submitted to the Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, for consideration in the ordinary way apart from entries for competitions. Such MSS. should be typewritten, or if this is impossible, printed legibly, and if their return is desired must be accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope. The Editor can accept no responsibility for the safety of MSS. although every care will be taken to ensure this. Acceptance will not imply immediate publication; payment will be made upon publication.

THE POETRY SOCIETY

(Incorporated)

Every boy and girl under eighteen years of age is now entitled to become a Junior Member of the Poetry Society.

Every junior member will enjoy the privileges of an ordinary member but, instead of *The Poetry Review,* will receive each quarter, post free, a special magazine called *The Voice of Youth.*

The Voice of Youth is the only magazine in the country addressed solely to all under eighteen, and devoted wholly to poetry.

The Poetry Society is the largest fellowship of poetry lovers in the world and, for over forty years, has played a great part in maintaining the strength and purity of this our English heritage.

YOU have the opportunity of joining as a Junior Member.

You can do so quite easily by completing the form below.

I,.....Date of Birth.....
Name in Block Letters.

of .....

apply for membership of the Poetry Society as a Junior Member, and enclose 5s. being subscription for one year.

Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed and made payable to The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square.